

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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R 181415Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1246
INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PINS, SHUM, SF
SUBJECT: DEATH OF STEVE BIKO; KRUGER ABSOLVES POLICE;
LISTS "REFORMS"

1. ACCORDING TO MAY 18 PRESS REPORTS, MINISTER OF JUSTICE JIMMY KRUGER TOLD PARLIAMENT THE PREVIOUS DAY THAT HE HAD ORDERED A POST-INQUEST INVESTIGATION INTO SOME UNSATISFACTORY ASPECTS OF THE BIKO CASE AND HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ALTHOUGH THE POLICE MAY HAVE MADE SOME ERRORS IN JUDGMENT, NO CHARGES WERE TO BE MADE BY THE POLICE BOARD AND NO FURTHER ACTION IN TH CASE IS PLANNED. KRUGER SAID THE ERRORS IN JUDGMENT HAD BEEN MADE CONCERNING FAILURE TO REPORT BIKO'S ILLNESS TO SUPERIOR OFFICERS, AND IN THE DECISION REGARDING WHERE AND WHEN TO HOSPITALIZE THE ILL DETAINEE.

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2. KRUGER LISTED THE FOLLOWING SPECIFIC "REFORMS" IN THE GUISE OF NEW POLICE COUNCIL REGULATIONS TO PROTECT DETAINEES (1) INTERROGATIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN "STRENGTHENED" ROOMS UNLESS LOCATED ON THE GROUND FLOOR, (2) MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WILL BE AVAILABLE IF A DETAINEE IS ILL OR COMPLAINS, (3) IF A DETAINEE OR PRISONER IS HOSPITALIZED, THE MINISTER WILL BE INFORMED

BY CABLE. IF A SECURITY RISK IS INVOLVED, POLICE HEAD-
QUARTERS WILL BE CONSULTED, (4) ILL DETAINEES SHALL NOT
BE MOVED FROM ONE CITY OR TOWN TO ANOTHER, (5) UNDER
CERTAIN SITUATIONS, DETAINEE'S RELATIVES WILL BE NOTI-
FIED IF HE IS SERIOUSLY ILL, AND (6) GREATER CAUTION
WILL BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT SUICIDES INCLUDING A PRO-
HIBITION AGAINST USE OF HANDCUFFS AND LEG IRON IF
POSSIBLE.

3. COMMENT: KRUGER WAS CLEARLY EXPECTING THE OP-
POSITION TO BROACH THE BIKO AFFAIR IN PARLIAMENT DURING
HIS DEPARTMENT'S BUDGET DEBATE AND PROBABLY HOPED TO
TAKE SOME WIND OUT OF PFP SAILS BY ANNOUNCING HIS SUB-
SEQUENT INVESTIGATION, CITING ERRORS IN JUDGMENT, AND
NEW POLICE RULES. "REFORMS" ALSO GAVE PRO-SAG PAPERS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SOOTHE CONSCIENCES BRUISED DURING BIKO
INQUEST REVELATIONS. NET EFFECT OF KRUGER'S STATEMENT AND THE BIKO
INQUEST FINDING IS THAT NO ONE UNDER EITHER THE POLICE OR
PRISONS DEPARTMENTS WILL BE REPRIMANDED OR PUNISHED FOR HIS
INVOLVEMENT IN THE BIKO AFFAIR.

4. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.
NELSON

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